

INFORMATION REPORT

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SOURCE

1. Top leaders of the SED listened to reports by KPD leaders from all states of the western zones at the Executive Committee meeting in Berlin 14-15 January 1948 and decided that the moment for revolution is not yet at hand. Otto Grotewohl stated, "We have come to the conclusion that the situation in the West is not a revolutionary one. The masses no longer labor under the illusions they had a year ago, but they are not yet ripe for political action. The masses, specifically the confused rabble in the Ruhr, are not yet the allies of the KPD. Our sole allies in the present battle are the count [redacted] of eastern Europe and the proletariat in England, France, and Italy. We cannot rely on the masses in the Ruhr."

2. Walter Ulbricht likewise placed the emphasis on eastern Europe, declaring, "Our connections with the eastern nations are developing extraordinarily well. We have the unqualified support of the Communist parties in these countries. In the course of 1948 we will receive great material aid." In private conversations Ulbricht predicted a Balkan federation will be formed early this summer, that all borders between the satellite states will be erased, that Italy and Russia will recognize General Markos, and that the Russians will drive the western powers out of Berlin.

25X1A [redacted] Comment: In the summer of 1946 Ulbricht predicted that the SED would win the October elections.)

3. Ulbricht was unwilling to write off his plans for revolution completely: "The situation in the West is gradually assuming a revolutionary character. The only thing stopping it is the occupying power. No one can continue to exist in the West under the present conditions. Revolutionary steps must be taken in the West as in the East and, if reactionary forces resist, the revolutionary forces will inevitably be strengthened. This is part of the battle with the Americans, who have taken off their kid gloves because they realize clearly that they must deal promptly with certain ideological realities."

4. On 19 January Wilhelm Pieck emphasized his agreement with Grotewohl that the time is not yet ready for revolution in the Ruhr. The greatest danger for the SED is that the U.S.A. might gain complete

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control of the Ruhr. The battle against the Marshall Plan is lost if the Ruhr is not kept under German control and its production routed to the East.

5. The decision of the Executive Committee rested mainly on reports from individual KPD observers. The report from Hesse, typical of many, follows:

"In Hesse the Volkskongress movement has not made much impression on the people. Nevertheless, the unity of Germany is everyone's heart's desire. The SPD is undergoing a severe crisis; ever new internal conflicts are arising. The only criticism of the SPD by the masses, however, is concerned solely with the leaders. The opposition exists but it is too gentle, too weak, it does not go far enough to demand a united workers' party.

"Many people are inclined to withdraw from active politics in disgust. In the SPD there is frightful chaos and clashing of personalities. A new intellectual clique is trying to take over but the situation is so confused that not even the party secretaries know what is happening. Policy is determined by a group which includes Stock, Metzger, Kolb, and others who rally round the government and support the coalition policy unswervingly. In a discussion of the possibility of getting Communist support in the battle over articles 37 and 41 of the constitution, Wagner said, 'We will never join the Communists on any point.'

"The strikes have shown that the workers are beginning to gain some class consciousness. I warn you, however, against optimism. These events are not revolutionary acts in the Marxist sense. They are merely the result of desperation and hunger. We must be careful not to assume that we can hitch up these people for political purposes. These strikes are valuable and important for us because they show that there is a spirit of independence among the masses, but I warn you not to attribute them to aroused class consciousness. I still do not believe that we can use them as a movement for the unity of Germany. It will take more time to prepare the working class for this step.

"The KPD is not well off. It is unable to carry out a revolutionary program. Apart from the masses, there is also a lack of leaders. Fisch and Bauer are sick. There are numerous new people who are not yet fully developed and there are too few people available by far.

"The American campaign against Communism has awakened the bourgeois intellectuals to the idea of Communism. They have become curious and are seeking information. On the other hand, there is great fear. I have written letters to many friends and acquaintances asking for their views on the unity of Germany, and the Volkskongress. I have not received a single answer, not even from my best friends. Fear alone prevents their answering.

"The farmers lean towards the CDU but some show interest in the KPD. They are afraid of the future; they say they will become beggars because foreign competition will destroy them. However, we have great success with the refugees who have no friends and no hopes. Our greatest problem is the PWs. A single PW returning from Russia can create chaos in a whole village by his appearance and his remarks. When they arrive at a railway station in their rags, they are surrounded by throngs and if we try to say anything we are beaten. Even our best orators do not dare say anything, because they would be controverted by the facts."

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